

our support, we help lift the spirits of those trying to organize.

We also help them win!

You know, there are some things an elected official should do . . . and some things an elected official should not do.

Well, let me tell you, one thing an elected official should never do . . . stand by and watch while a state supported university tries to derail a union organizing drive the way Michigan State University tried to stop its teaching assistants from organizing earlier this year.

That is why last February I began to help the MSU graduate students organize.

Graduate students teach classes, grade papers and do research—they spend up to 30 hours a week working with no medical coverage and minimal compensation . . . and that's on top of their own graduate coursework.

MSU was the only research university in Michigan where teaching assistants did not have collective bargaining rights.

So we got together with the students and the Michigan Federation of Teachers to see what could be done.

We began by gathering signatures on petitions in support of the student organizing drive.

I called MSU President Peter McPherson several times asking that his Administration remain neutral during the organizing campaign.

Some of us in the Michigan Congressional delegation (KILPATRICK, KILDEE & CONYERS) sent a joint letter to President McPherson as well.

As it got close to the vote, I wrote a letter in support of the drive which was published in the student newspaper.

And during the election, a number of us who supported the students stopped by the campaign headquarters.

Together, I believe we made a difference in the lives of these students . . . and I am proud to say there are over 1,200 new union members in the State of Michigan today because of it.

I know a number of my colleagues have similar experiences to share, and I would encourage everyone to look for ways to lend their voice to organizing efforts—when we work together, we build a better place to live for all of us.

VICTORY AT MSU REQUIRED TEAMWORK  
(By David Decker)

The successful organizing effort at MSU was a yearlong project. It required a massive amount of work and then when we filed enough cards to get an election, the MSU administration launched an anti-union campaign. Through it all the campaign moved forward by talking one-on-one with the graduate employees from each department at work, on campus and in their homes. As the campaign progressed we added a web site, e-mail list, and a get-out-the-vote phone bank. In addition to organizing the graduate employees we also organized our friends in the U.S. Congress, the Michigan House and Senate, and in organized labor to bring pressure on the MSU administration to stop its anti-union campaign.

MFT & SRP organizer Jon Curtiss, the BEU organizing staff, steering committee, and department contacts led the organizing effort at MSU. Augmenting Jon and the GEU crew were numerous volunteers from the Graduate Employees Organization (University of Michigan), including President Cedric

DeLeon and staffer Mark Dille who worked the campaign full-time in the closing weeks and from the Graduate Employees Organizing Committee (Wayne State), including President Peter Williams, Glenn Bessemer and staffer Charlie Grose. At key point throughout the campaign MFT & SRP PSRP organizer, Krista Schneider, lent her assistance.

But while the key to the victory, the MSU graduate assistants and staff did not stand-alone. They received incredible support from elected officials, other labor organizations, and the greater MSU community.

Congressman David Bonior voiced concern to MSU President McPherson directly and in a letter concerning the university's anti-union campaign, and had a letter printed in the State News supporting the organizing drive. Joining Bonior in a letter were U.S. Representatives John Conyers, Carolyn Kilpatrick and Dale Kildee, Congressman Sander Levin also talked with President McPherson expressing his concerns. And Congressman Bart Stupak sent a letter as well.

State Representatives David Woodward (D-Royal Oak), Buzz Thomas (D-Detroit) and Bill McConico (D-Detroit), a member of the Highland Park Federation of Teachers, all stopped by the office to help with the Get Out The Vote Effort. A total of 26 State Legislators signed a letter to President McPherson, State Senator Diane Byrum sent a letter with similar theme.

State Representative Ray Bashamis staffer, Hoon-Yung Hopgood, Senate Democrat Office staffer Dana Houle, and State Democratic Party staffer Dennis Denno all helped with phone calls.

Scores of MSU alumni, including Detroit teachers President Janna Garrison, Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Don Boggs, Organization of School Administrations President Diann Woodard, labor attorney David Radtke (who also spent a day helping with organizing house calls), wrote President McPherson.

Numerous unions including Operating Engineers Local 547, AFSCME Council 25 and Teamsters Joint Council 43 let the MSU President know what they thought of the anti-union effort, MSU alumnus Jack Finn, Legislative Director of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 876, expressed his thoughts in a letter printed in the State News. SEIU lobbyist Cindy Paul joined in with house calls, while Julie Barton from Jobs For Justice helped with the phone bank. UAW Regional Director Cal Rapson called University Trustees on our behalf.

Michigan State AFL-CIO President Mark Gaffney and the staff—Denise Cook, Ken Fletcher, Mark Alexander and Mary Holbrook provided their support. Former Michigan AFL-CIO President Frank Garrison also made contracts on behalf of the MSU graduate assistants.

The MSU Labor Coalition, headed by Wayne Cass of Operating Engineers Local 547, was there throughout the yearlong campaign as was the Clerical-Technical Union who early on lent us their offices for meetings and at the end helped with the phone bank.

Two MSU Trustees, Board Chair Colleen McNamara, and Trustee Dorothy Gonzalez took all of our calls, met with us, and urged the Administration not to run an anti-union campaign.

THE THREAT TO WORKERS' FREEDOM TO CHOOSE  
A UNION

The struggles working people face are not exceptions to the rule—when a majority of workers say they want a union, employers routinely threaten their right to make their own free choice with a campaign of coercion, harassment and firings.

Ninety-one percent of employers, when faced with employees who want to join together in a union, force employees to attend closed-door meetings to hear anti-union propaganda; 80 percent require immediate supervisors to attend training sessions on how to attack unions; and 79 percent have supervisors deliver anti-union messages to workers they oversee.

Eighty percent hire outside consultants to run anti-union campaigns, often based on mass psychology and distorting the law.

Half of employers threaten to shut down if employees join together in a union.

In 31 percent of organizing campaigns, employers illegally fire workers just because they want to form a union.

Even after workers go through all this and win a National Labor Relations Board election to form a union, one-third of the time their employer never negotiates a contract with them.

More than at any time in recent history, working people are joining together in unions with the hope of improving our living standards, our communities and our jobs. But as workers succeed, employers are stepping up a campaign of coercion, firings and harassment to block our freedom to make our own decisions about joining a union.

That's why the AFL-CIO and its 13-million-member affiliated unions have begun a broad, long-term campaign to restore the balance needed to protect the right of workers to make a free choice to join a union.

Through Voice@Work, unions are helping workers form unions in a new way. Right from a campaign's start, workers reach out to their elected representatives, clergy members and other community leaders to gain support for their freedom to form a union. Many of these community leaders eagerly back their constituents' efforts to build better lives for their families and help call on employers to avoid intimidation and coercion.

7 Days in June is the annual high point in our effort. We join together—workers, our unions, state federations and central labor councils, community leaders, clergy, public officials and students—to say employer interference with workers' choices is unacceptable. 7 Days in June this year is June 9 through 16. It promises to be even bigger than last year, when more than 12,000 working people, community leaders and elected officials participated in more than 120 events in 100 cities.

Working families will continue to push for a voice at work by telling Americans why workers are struggling to form unions and how their employers are waging a war against them.

TRIBUTE TO MR. MICHAEL M.  
GLASSON

HON. DALE E. KILDEE  
OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 13, 2001

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a man who has faithfully served the citizens of Genesee County, Michigan, for 15 years. On June 18, civic, community, and government leaders will join family and friends to honor Mr. Michael M. Glasson, as he retires as County Purchasing Director.

Michael Glasson was born and raised in my hometown of Flint, and holds a Bachelors Degree from Michigan State University and a Masters in Public Administration from Wayne State University. In 1974, he began his career